APRIL 2004

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

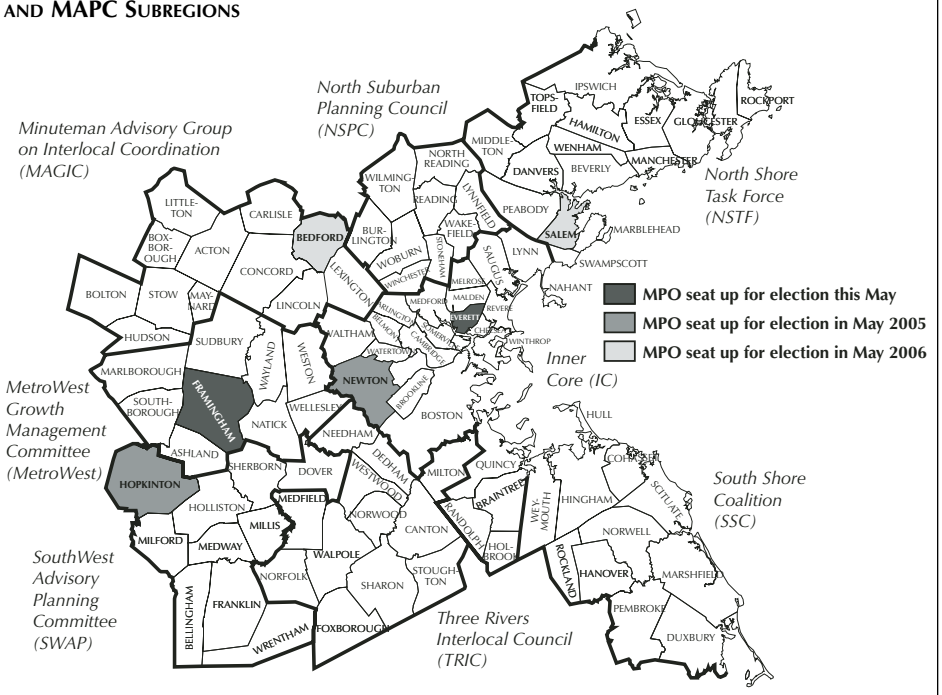
Nomination Period Opens For MPO Elections to Be Held in May

In March the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board sent nomination papers and informational material about the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization election procedures to the chief elected officials of the region's 101 cities and towns. The materials outlined the process for submitting nominations for the two MPO seats (one city and one town) whose terms are expiring this year. Nomination papers, which must be accompanied by the signatures of five chief elected officials, are *due on April 20*.

A Candidates' Night has been tentatively scheduled for May 6 in the event of contested races. The time and location of this event will be announced in the May issue of *TRANSREPORT* and space will also be made available for statements from all candidates.

The MPO election will be held at MAPC's Annual Spring Meeting on May 26 at the Marriott Newton Hotel.

BOSTON MPO REGION
AND MAPC SUBREGIONS



MBTA Rider Oversight Committee Begins Work

On March 29 the recently created, 24-member MBTA Rider Oversight Committee (ROC) held its second meeting. The purpose of the ROC, which is comprised of eight public, eight MBTA, and eight advisory group representatives, is to provide a forum to address the concerns of public transit riders.

The current focus of the ROC is on developing an organizational structure that will enable it to efficiently address the broad range of issues that are likely to come before it. ROC members are considering the establishment of at least four standing committees:

- Outreach/Communication – To identify promote, and advocate for programs and models that demonstrate the value of good public transportation by working with stakeholders.
- Capital Improvements – To assist and advise the MBTA in addressing federal and state planning requirements.
- Operations – To provide assistance and guidance on service delivery.

■ MBTA Rider Committee *cont. on p. 4*

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The members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Executive Office of Transportation and Construction • City of Boston • City of Everett • City of Newton • City of Salem • Federal Highway Administration • Federal Transit Administration • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board • Massachusetts Highway Department • Massachusetts Port Authority • Massachusetts Turnpike Authority • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Regional Transportation Advisory Council • Town of Bedford • Town of Framingham • Town of Hopkinton

Boston Region MPO Activities

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Action Items

On March 18 the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee of the Boston Region MPO approved three Central Transportation Planning Staff work programs:

- The North Suburban Transit Opportunities Study, Phase II – The first phase of this study examined the feasibility of new commuter transit services connecting major employment destinations along the Route 128 corridor. The purpose of the study's second phase is to develop the transit service improvement ideas identified in Phase I at a greater level of detail, with particular attention paid to a potential shuttle service operating to and from the Anderson Regional Transportation Center in Woburn.
- The Regionwide Suburban Transit Opportunities Study, Phase II – Phase I of this study provided a review of suburban transit opportunities in similar metropolitan areas, an assessment of existing services in the Boston region, and guidelines for operating successful transit service in Boston suburbs. In Phase II, project staff will identify where new transit services may be successful and will provide generalized routings. In addition, staff will provide technical assistance to entities selected to receive funding under the MPO's new Suburban Mobility Program.
- An addendum to the Silver Line Phase III Ridership Program – The purpose of this work effort is to assist the MBTA in its submittal for funding under the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts Program by refining its travel modeling procedures.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

Transportation Secretary Daniel A. Grabauskas met with the Council at the March meeting to discuss statewide transportation planning goals. He focused particularly on how the state's new project selection criteria and the Fix-it-First and Communities First initiatives relate to the Boston region. The Secretary also shared his views on how the Council can continue to be a positive influence on the transportation planning process. In addition, Rosemary Siemens of the Central Massachusetts MPO (CMMPO), gave a presentation on the important transportation issues and priority projects in that region. The CMMPO, headquartered in Worcester, is a new ex officio member of the Council.

On April 28 the Council will to conduct a tour of all three phases of the MBTA's Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit project. (See the calendar on page 4 for details.)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

On March 11, the MBTA Board of Directors approved four new contracts with the MBTA's current paratransit service providers for fiscal years 2005 through 2009. Greater Lynn Senior Services, the Joint Venture, Kiessling Transportation, Inc., and Veterans Transportation Services will continue to provide THE RIDE service within the areas they now serve. The new contracts will begin on November 1. In the meantime, AACT will work with the MBTA and THE RIDE vendors on the implementation of new service improvements that are included in the contracts. The MBTA Board's action marked the culmination of a months-long selection process that included the participation of AACT Chairman Jim Oliver.

Upcoming Boston Region Conferences

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Massachusetts Port Authority, and the Volpe Center are co-organizers of a conference entitled Technologies for Homeland Security that will take place on April 21 and 22 at the Volpe Center in Cambridge. Participants will discuss operations requirements, technologies, and funding aspects of developing and deploying mission-critical security solutions for the transportation security community. Visit IEEE's Web site at www.ieee-boston.org/homeland.htm for more information about the event or to register for the conference.

On May 4 the Patriot Chapter of the Association for Commuter Transportation will hold its Second Annual New England Transportation Demand Management Conference and Awards Luncheon.

The conference will take place from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston. For more information about the session topics, speakers, cost, etc., or to register, visit the ACT Patriot Chapter Web site at www.abctma.

Rail Consortium Announces Settlement

On March 17 the consortium of Amtrak and Bombardier/Alstom announced the settlement of all legal disputes associated with the $1.2 billion high-speed-train delivery program, which covered the performance and maintenance of 20 Acela Express trainsets for a 10-year period. Under the agreement, the parties will drop all claims against each other and the consortium will be entitled to receive $42.5 million against approximately $70 million that Amtrak previously withheld. In addition, Amtrak will assume responsibility for the train maintenance beginning in October 2006.

MBTA Projects Underway on the Red, Orange, and Green Lines; Bus Services Adjusted and Shuttles Added

The Red Line

The MBTA began the Red Line Rehabilitation and Modernization Project earlier this month. The project involves the modernization of three stations: Savin Hill, Fields Corner, and Shawmut. Work on the three stations will consist of the following:

- Savin Hill will be completely demolished and modernized, with new platforms, a headhouse, and two new elevators.
- Fields Corner's busways will be lowered to street level and the station lobby will be constructed under the existing Red Line tracks.
- Shawmut involves the historic restoration of the existing station combined with the addition of two new elevators, egress stairs, and waterproofing of the tunnel cap.

To accommodate construction, bus routes 17, 18, 19, 20, and 210, serving Fields Corner Station, have been temporarily rerouted to the bottom of the bus ramp on Geneva Avenue. Customers traveling to and from Fields Corner Station should board and disembark at this temporary bus location. The reroutings will continue for approximately three years in order to allow the existing busway to be demolished. MBTA personnel will be there to direct customers to subway service. In addition, the Charles Park entrance to Fields Corner Station will be closed. Customers must use station entrances located on Dorchester Avenue and Geneva Avenue.

In related Red Line news, the final design for the rehabilitation of Ashmont Station is nearly complete, with construction advertisement scheduled for late spring 2004.

The Orange Line

Installation of a state-of-the-art automated train operating (ATO) system on the Orange Line from Chinatown to Oak Grove began on March 28. The existing signal system from Haymarket to Oak Grove is approximately 30 years old and will be replaced with an innovative, fully functional system that includes new switch machines, train stop devices, track circuits, signal rooms, and cabling throughout the project limits (Chinatown to Oak Grove). The new ATO system will be compatible with the existing signal system on the Southwest Corridor (Back Bay to Forest Hills) and will significantly improve system reliability and capacity while at the same time allowing for increased operational flexibility.

As part of this four-year project, a one-track operation between Haymarket and Sullivan Stations during off-peak hours will occur and will be supplemented by bus replacement service between Sullivan and Oak Grove stations. From Sunday through Thursday evenings from 9:00 P.M. through the end of service each night, for approximately eight months, MBTA contractors will be allowed early access to the Orange Line. During that time, buses will be available to transport customers between Sullivan and Oak Grove stations. The MBTA will continue to update customers as the project progresses.

The Green Line

The MBTA has begun track improvements on the E Line between Copley Station and Heath Street Station. During this time, bus shuttle replacement service will be in effect on this section of the route when necessary during the construction period. Bus shuttle service will begin at the start of service on Sunday, April 4, 2004, and will continue through the end of service Sunday night or until completion of construction for this portion of the project. Free westbound shuttle bus service will be available at all street-level stations, making local stops along Huntington Avenue. Green Line and Bus Operations personnel will be available throughout the weekend to direct passengers to the shuttle buses. Commuters are advised that this bus diversion may result in a commute that is 10-15 minutes longer than usual. This work will require future bus replacement service on selected weekends and the MBTA will advise commuters of upcoming diversions via customer notices posted in stations and placed in vehicles.

MBTA to Hold Meeting on North Shore MIS

The MBTA will hold an information meeting in Peabody on April 7 at 7:00 P.M. to discuss the results of the Major Investment Study (MIS) for the North Shore Transportation Improvements Project, particularly as it affects Danvers, Peabody, and other communities from Salem north.

The purpose of the meeting is to solicit public input for the preparation of the final MIS report. In addition, interested members of the public are invited to attend a 6:30 P.M. open house to meet with MBTA staff and the project team.

At this meeting, the MBTA and its consultants will discuss the process by which the MIS Universe of Projects was identified, the projects or programs that were evaluated in the MIS, and the recommended priority ratings for each project. The projects have been categorized as short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for sign language interpreters or assistive listening devices by contacting Mary Clifford, MBTA, at (617) 222-3257. See the calendar on page four for location details.

Meeting Calendar

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

At the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Thursday, April 1
Boston Region MPO Transportation Improvement Program Community Input Day — 9:00 A.M.
MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Thursday, April 8
Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session — 10:00 A.M.
To be followed by
Boston Region MPO Transportation Improvement Program Agency Input Day
MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, April 14
Regional Transportation Advisory Council — 3:00 P.M.
Conference Room 4

Thursday, April 22
Boston RegionMPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting — 10:00 A.M.
MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, April 28
Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) — 1:00 P.M.
Conference Room 2

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Tour: Silver Line Phases I, II, and III — 1:00 P.M.
To reserve space, contact Bill Moore at (617) 973-7144 or bill.moore@ctps.org.

Call (617) 222-5179 for date
MBTA Board of Directors — 1:00 P.M.
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

At Other Boston-Area Locations

Wednesday, April 7
MBTA North Shore Major Investment Study Meeting — 10:00 A.M.
Peabody Community Life Center
Jubilee Hall
79 Central Street, Peabody

Wednesday, April 14
MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Replacement of Central Street Bridge over the Sudbury River in Framingham — 7:00 P.M.
Framingham Town Hall
Public Hearing Room
150 Concord Road, Framingham,

Tuesday, April 20
North End Central Artery Advisory Committee: Update on Park Design Components — 6:00 P.M.
Nazzaro Community Center
30 North Bennet Street, Boston

Tuesday, April 27
New Charles River Basin Citizens Advisory Committee — 4:00 P.M.
For location, contact Charlotte Fleetwood at cxfleetw@bigdig.com

Wednesday, April 28
Boston MPO Study: Transportation Improvements for Major Downtown Salem Roadways — 9:00 A.M.
Salem City Hall Annex
Planning Department
120 Washington Street, Salem

Meeting dates and times are subject to change: please call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional transportation meetings open to the public are listed on the Boston Region MPO Web site, at www.bostonmpo.org.

■ MBTA Rider Committee *cont. from p. 1*

- Finance – To assist and advise on decisions to enhance system revenue and other nontransportation revenue.

In addition to the standing committees, ad hoc committees will be formed to study and make recommendations on specific issues as they arise.

The committee is also in the process of adopting bylaws and defining its work program for the upcoming year. The next meeting will be held on May 17. Look for meeting details in next month's *TRANSREPORT*.

TRANSREPORT

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TRANSREPORT is available in accessible formats to people with disabilities. Contact the Central Transportation Planning Staff Certification Activities Group at (617) 973-7119 (voice), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), (617) 973-8855 (fax), or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail).

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